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VOLUME 37, NUMBER 1

JANUARY 1968



BETHEL CHURCH, OOSTBURG, DEDICATES NEW ADDITION TO BUILDING

With its seating capacity increased to 600, the building addition of Bethel Church, Oostburg, Wisconsin was dedicated at an evening service on December 18. Presiding was the pastor, the Rev. Donald Stanton. Former Pastor John Verhage, now of Grand Junction, Colorado, preached a sermon on "The Christian's Love for the Lord's House," from Psalm 26:8.

A prayer of dedication was offered by the Rev. Henry Fikkert, Cedar Grove. The Rev. Ivan DeMaster, a son of the congregation now in Westchester, Illinois, brought greetings from

the Presbytery. Mrs. Oscar Holkeboer of Calvin College, widow of the founding pastor, spoke of the early days in 1936 when the Orthodox Presbyterian Church began. The choir under the direction of Richard Soerens, with Mrs. John Daane at the organ, sang an anthem of praise.

The additional 16 feet on each side also provides ten more Sunday school classrooms downstairs. A 'cry' room is found near the entrance. Aisles and narthex are carpeted and a new transistorized public address system has been installed. The exterior of the \$120,000 addition is of reddish brown brick.

A NEW PULPIT IS DEDICATED

C. VAN TIL

We dedicate this pulpit to the memory of Dr. Ned Bernard Stonehouse, who, together with his family, worshipped with this congregation from its inception and who worshipped here on the morning of the very last day of his life.

Of course, we dedicate this pulpit first of all to Christ, the king of his church. At the same time it is fitting that as we do so we keep in thankful remembrance the name of his servant. Dr. Stonehouse loved and labored with diligence in Westminster Theological Seminary. He also labored with love and devotion in this congregation, in the Presbytery of Philadelphia, in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and in the church of Christ universal. But in and through it all he loved and labored to the praise of his Savior.

God made Dr. Stonehouse an able minister of the New Testament. When I say this I am not thinking of the gifts of heart and mind with which his Creator-Redeemer had endowed him. He did have these gifts in large measure. His professors in the New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary, Dr. William Park Armstrong and Dr. J. Gresham Machen as well as the professor supervising his doctoral work at the Free University of Amsterdam, Dr. F. H. Grosheide, all spoke with glowing terms of these his extraordinary gifts.

But he knew from his earliest days as a student that if he were to become an able minister of the New Testament then he must say with Paul: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God" (2 Cor. 3:5).

If the first of modern philosophers said: "I think, therefore, I am," Dr. Stonehouse said: "I think the church of the New Testament, therefore I am." In a profound sense his personality was identical with his office and his task.

New Testament Teacher

Immediately upon his graduation from Amsterdam he was inducted into New Testament teaching at Westminster Seminary. This was in September

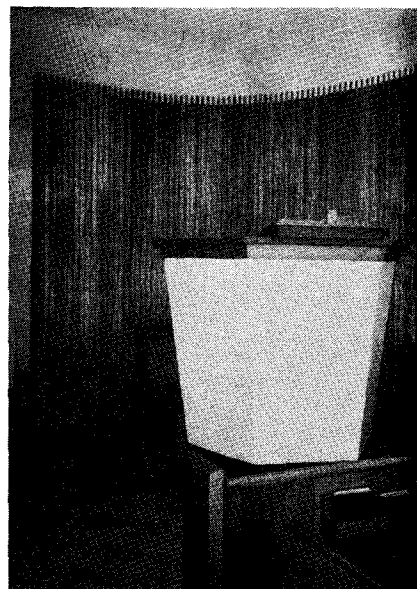
1929. What a marvelous prospect now opened up to him, the prospect of serving in almost daily companionship with his great teacher and friend, Dr. Machen. Even as a student Dr. Stonehouse had learned of the struggle going on in the church. He knew that Dr. Machen was right in the center of that struggle. He knew that if he were to work with joy then he must, like Dr. Machen, be valiant for truth.

Ere long it became clear to Dr. Machen that he had made no mistake in choosing his assistant for the teaching and the defense of the New Testament. He gave eloquent expression to his conviction on this point when he preached the ordination sermon for Dr. Stonehouse in February of 1932.

To make men to be "specialists in the Bible" — that, said Dr. Machen, was the work to which Westminster Seminary was dedicated. Dr. Machen did not mean this in any narrow sense. For him systematic theology was at the center of the curriculum. But systematic theology too came from the Bible. "What a world in itself the Bible is, my friends! Happy are those who in the providence of God can make the study of it very specifically the business of their lives; but happy also is every Christian who has it open before him and seeks by daily study to penetrate somewhat into the wonderful richness of what it contains" (*Christian Scholarship and Building Up, in the Church in What is Christianity?*, p. 141).

But it was not to be for long. The period of companionship in arms for the defense and the confirmation of the gospel between the two men was terminated by the sudden death of Dr. Machen on January 1, 1937.

It was five years ago in November 1962 that Dr. Stonehouse went to be with the Lord. On December 17, 1967 Dr. Van Til spoke these words on the occasion of the dedication of a new pulpit in memory of Dr. Stonehouse in the Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Glenside, Pennsylvania.



Suddenly the burden borne by two men rested upon one, the younger one. Moreover, the enemies of the gospel of God's redeeming grace through the miraculous birth, the life, the death and resurrection of Christ fought with new weapons now.

In the days of Machen the enemy denied then one and then another or even several doctrines of the Christian faith. In the days of Stonehouse the enemy affirmed all the doctrines of the Christian faith but gave them all a new meaning. Thus, for instance, Karl Barth said he believed the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection of Christ, but that neither of these must be identified directly with anything that happened in history.

A time of great trial and strain was now in store for Stonehouse. If ever in his life he felt the necessity of saying with Paul, "Not that we are sufficient to think anything as of ourselves," it was at this time when the mantle of Elijah was on Elisha cast.

The Inaugural Address

"Rudolph Bultmann's Jesus" was the title of his inaugural address as Professor of the New Testament. But why choose Rudolph Bultmann's view of Jesus for his inaugural address? Because Bultmann was the greatest expert in the use of the newest weapons discovered by which one can affirm in word but deny in fact the Christ of the New Testament.

Stonehouse knew that in defending his historic Christian faith against

Bultmann he was, at the same time, also defending it against Karl Barth. If Bultmann was more "extreme" in his historical skepticism, Barth was "essentially in agreement" with Bultmann "on the all-determinative matter of the doctrine of God, including the philosophy of nature and of history" (*Ibid.*, p. 111).

At the end of his address Stonehouse made a final reference to his beloved teacher and friend: "That Christianity stands or falls with the historicity of certain foundational events was preeminently the message which Dr. Machen proclaimed to this generation." A "new face has been put upon life by the blessed thing that God did when he offered up his only begotten Son." With these words of Machen's Stonehouse concluded his address.

Rudolph Bultmann's Jesus had no power to "put a new face upon life" for this Jesus is a myth. Bultmann's Jesus leaves men in utter despair. For those who follow this Jesus there is *no exit* from death, from *eternal* death. Bultmann's Jesus does not set men free; he gives them no hope. Those who follow Bultmann's Jesus follow a mirage in the desert; they never drink of the water of life.

Dr. Stonehouse lectured at a number of institutions in other lands as well as in this. He wrote several books dealing with New Testament truth and a biography of Dr. Machen worthy of the man.

Relation to his Church

To new responsibility at Westminster Seminary there was added new responsibility in the church. By force of circumstances Dr. Machen and his associates were compelled to organize what is now the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Absorbed as he was in his teaching and writing for the defense of the faith, Dr. Stonehouse found time to give leadership in the local church, in Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Glenside, in the Presbytery of Philadelphia, and in the various General Assemblies of the Church as a whole.

Opposed to all false ecumenism, the ecumenism that centers around the Christ-myth of neo-orthodox theology of such men as Bultmann and Barth, Stonehouse advocated a true ecumenism. In the interest of such an ecumenism he represented his church at the Reformed Ecumenical Synods held in Amsterdam (1949); in Edinburgh

(1953); and in Potchefstroom (1959).

But once more, it was not to be for long. On October 23, 1962 he gave the charge to Professor Skilton upon the latter's inauguration to the professorship of New Testament Language and Literature. Addressing Dr. Skilton, Stonehouse said: "We have been friends for some thirty years and colleagues and co-workers for well over twenty" (*The Presbyterian Guardian*, Dec. 1962, p. 163). Then he added that "basic to our whole enterprise is our concern to be faithful to the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God. This is, as you know, a part of our Princeton heritage." "But in closing, I desire to express with all emphasis that, as your colleague and friend, my deepest hope is that in the coming years you may be able to carry forward your great central task as Professor of New Testament Language and Literature with the very minimum of distraction and with the utmost measure of single-minded commitment, enthusiasm and liberty" (*Ibid.*, p. 164).

To teach and preach with single-minded commitment, enthusiasm and liberty, the Christ of the New Testament for the salvation of all men everywhere, this was Dr. Stonehouse's lifelong passion.

A Colleague's Tribute

At the funeral service in this church Dr. Skilton paid tribute to Dr. Stonehouse as Dr. Stonehouse had once paid tribute to Dr. Machen. "His exceptional gifts of comprehensiveness of view, perception, analysis, and precision of judgment and expression were applied not only to the major problems of administrative and academic work and the extension of the witness and usefulness of the Seminary, but also to minor routine and unspectacular matters. He so closely identified himself with the work of our Seminary and so freely spent himself for our benefit that we may say that he truly belonged to us." But finally and above all "he belonged to his Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He rejoiced in the efficacy for his sins of the sacrifice which the Son of God made for him on the cross. He was united to his Redeemer, and he sought to exalt his name and to confront men with the whole counsel of God which is given to us in the unerrant Scriptures."

Many of us have heard Dr. Stonehouse proclaim the gospel of sovereign grace from the old pulpit of this

church. How fitting that as we this day dedicate this new pulpit to Christ, the king of the church, we should do so in grateful remembrance of Dr. Ned Bernard Stonehouse, whose highest degree was not that of Th.D. (Doctor of Theology) but that of V.D.M. (*Verbum Dei Minister*), Minister of the Word of God.

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